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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended) A longitudinal plunging unit for transmitting torque in a shaft assembly, comprising:

a profiled sleeve with circumferentially distributed, longitudinally extending first ball grooves;

a profiled journal which comprises a first portion with circumferentially distributed, longitudinally extending second ball grooves with ball groove run-outs, and ~~as well as~~ an axially adjoining second portion;

balls which are arranged in groups in pairs of first ball grooves and second ball grooves; ~~and~~

a ball cage ~~which is~~ arranged radially between the profiled sleeve and the profiled journal and ~~fixes~~ fixing the balls in their axial position relative to one another, wherein the ball cage is displaceable, relative to the profiled journal, between axial stops arranged at a distance from one another[~~[,]~~]; and

~~wherein there is arranged~~ an abutment sleeve on the profiled journal, ~~which abutment sleeve is able to abut~~ and abutting the profiled journal or a component connected thereto ~~and delimits~~ to delimit the displacement path of the ball cage towards the second portion.

2.-10. (cancelled)

11. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve comprises an inner diameter which is greater than a greatest outer diameter of the first portion of the profiled journal.

12. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve comprises an outer diameter which is smaller than a smallest inner diameter of the profiled sleeve in a region of the ball grooves.

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13. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 11, wherein the abutment sleeve comprises an outer diameter which is smaller than a smallest inner diameter of the profiled sleeve in a region of the ball grooves.

14. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts a ball hub of a constant velocity universal joint secured to an end of the profiled journal, which end faces away from the profiled sleeve.

15. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein a length of the abutment sleeve is such that the balls facing the abutment sleeve, in an end position of the ball cage, are each arranged with an axial distance from the ball groove run-out.

16. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 11, wherein a length of the abutment sleeve is such that the balls facing the abutment sleeve, in an end position of the ball cage, are each arranged with an axial distance from the ball groove run-out.

17. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 12, wherein a length of the abutment sleeve is such that the balls facing the abutment sleeve, in an end position of the ball cage, are each arranged with an axial distance from the ball groove run-out.

18. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts a securing ring positioned in an annular groove of the profiled journal, wherein the annular groove axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

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19. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 11, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts a securing ring positioned in an annular groove of the profiled journal, wherein the annular groove axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

20. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 12, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts a securing ring positioned in an annular groove of the profiled journal, wherein the annular groove axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

21. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 15, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts a securing ring positioned in an annular groove of the profiled journal, wherein the annular groove axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

22. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts an annular collar of the profiled journal, wherein the annular collar axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

23. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 11, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts an annular collar of the profiled journal, wherein the annular collar axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

24. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 12, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts an annular collar of the profiled journal, wherein the annular collar axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

25. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 15, wherein the abutment sleeve abuts an annular collar of the profiled journal, wherein the annular collar axially adjoins the ball groove run-out of the profiled journal.

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26. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve is integral with the ball cage.

27. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 11, wherein the abutment sleeve is integral with the ball cage.

28. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 12, wherein the abutment sleeve is integral with the ball cage.

29. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 15, wherein the abutment sleeve is integral with the ball cage.

30. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 18, wherein the abutment sleeve is integral with the ball cage.

31. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 22, wherein the abutment sleeve is integral with the ball cage.

32. (new) A longitudinal plunging unit according to claim 1, wherein the abutment sleeve is plastic or metal.